

# The resilience of Venezuelan immigrants in Ecuador La resiliencia de los inmigrantes venezolanos en Ecuador

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## Resumen

El estudio actual tiene como objetivo general evaluar los niveles de resiliencia que poseen los inmigrantes venezolanos que residieron en Ecuador desde enero de 2018 hasta noviembre del mismo año. La resiliencia, en psicología, es el proceso de buena adaptación contra la adversidad, trauma, tragedia, amenaza o tensiones significativas de alto estrés. Integra varios factores como la autoestima, la autonomía, la creatividad, el humor, la autoconfianza, el apoyo social y la empatía; Estos fueron analizados a través de una herramienta psicométrica denominada "Inventario de factores personales de resiliencia". Este estudio se realizó con una muestra de población de venezolanos que viven en el refugio provisto por la organización Hogar de Cristo en Guayaquil. Los resultados demostraron que existe un nivel medio de resiliencia general de acuerdo con los puntajes promedio. No obstante, al analizar los resultados de los factores individuales, se observó que los factores mejor calificados fueron la autoestima y la autonomía.

**Palabras clave:** Inmigrantes, resiliencia, adversidad, autonomía, autoestima

## Abstract

The current study has as a general objective to evaluate the levels of resilience possessed by Venezuelan immigrants who resided in Ecuador from January 2018 until November of the same year. Resilience, in psychology, is the process of good adaptation against adversity, trauma, tragedy, threat or significant tensions regarding interpersonal conflicts, health difficulties and high stress situations. It integrates various factors such as self-esteem, autonomy, creativity, humor, self-confidence, social support and empathy; these were analyzed through a psychometric tool denominated "Personal factors of resilience inventory". This study was done with a sample population of Venezuelan nationals who live in the refuge provided by the Hogar de Cristo organization in Guayaquil. The results demonstrated that there is a medium level of general resilience according to the average scores. Nonetheless, when analyzing the individual factor results, it was observed that the highest rated factors were self-esteem and autonomy.

**Keywords:** Immigrants, resilience, adversity, autonomy, self-esteem

## Introduction

Forced migration is becoming an ever more common theme in today's globalized world. There are currently, 25,4 million refugees worldwide, as stated by Amnesty International (2019). International Humanitarian crises have increased from 16 events to 30 in the time period between 2005 and 2017. Around 16,2 million people were newly displaced by conflict and violence in 2017 alone; this amounts to 44,000 people being forced from their homes every day. Nearly 70 million people are currently displaced worldwide, most of them within their own borders, Syria being at the top of the list of countries with people internally displaced by conflict, with 6,8 million; followed by Colombia, with 6.5 million; the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with 4,5 million; Sudan, with 2,1 million; and Iraq, with 2 million (United Nations Organization, 2018). Venezuela is facing its largest humanitarian crisis of its history. In every conflict, in every situation, thousands of people are affected; some lose property and family, others even lose their lives. In the face of such calamity, what distinguishes those that most persevere and overcome these challenges over those that do not? Why do some people "stagnate" at one point in their lives, without the ability to move on, whereas others find a way to overcome? Psychologists have studied these cases in detail, and point to a key factor to help answer such questions:

"Resilience", derives from the Latin verb *resilio* that gives a notion of jump, jumping back; also the quality of being able to recover successfully from injury or disaster (Cohen, 2017; Cyrulnik, 2017; Rutter, 1990).

The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is critical. This has been traced to the death of President Hugo Chávez, leaving the government of the republic in the hands of Nicolás Maduro. Venezuela is in the midst of an economic and political crisis aggravated by shortages of medicines and food, rising crime rates and an authoritarian government (Council on Foreign Affairs, 2018). The current government has taken steps to consolidate its power, holding much-questioned elections to replace legislation. The president's actions have been met with massive protests and international condemnation and these have threatened to delegitimize the most recent election campaign. One of the consequences of this uneasiness felt by citizens with the government has been manifested in a massive migration, mostly forced and the proclamation of an interim president by the Venezuelan National Assembly, Juan Guaido, making Venezuela the only south American country to have two presidents. Moreover, Guaido has been internationally recognized by over 14 countries whereas President Maduro has the support of 6 countries including his own government. This has sparked an international conflict among countries that support Guaido and those who support Maduro and the effect these alliances have on migration reforms and status.

The number of Venezuelan immigrants in Latin America went from 89.000 to 900.000 individuals in 2 years, indicating a 900% growth. Around the world, Venezuelan mobilization increased by almost 110% between 2015 and 2017, from 700.000 to more than one million (UN News, 2018).. From January to August 2018, 115.690 Venezuelan migrants entered Ecuador. The country received around 240.000 Venezuelan immigrant since 2015 until 2019, from which more than 100.000 have obtained regulated legal status and a residence identification card (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2019), 13.535 applied for refugee status between 2014 and 2018 (Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, 2019). This has resulted in a humanitarian crisis in Ecuador. Many of them have managed to get ahead and prosper in this country; others are still looking for possibilities and waiting for opportunities. And they are the members of this group, the so-called resilient individuals.

The term resilience is the process of good adaptation to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threat or significant strong tensions such as problems in interpersonal relationships and family, health problems or situations of high stress at work or financial. In colloquial terms, it is the "bouncing" of a difficult experience or situation (American Psychology Association, n.d.). Resilience is integrated by several factors that vary from author to author, but those that are repeated are self-esteem, autonomy, creativity, humor, self-confidence, social support, and empathy. The set of these factors are those that create a resilient personality capable of facing situations. Self-esteem, according to Nathaniel Branden (1990), comprises two components: a feeling of personal competence and a feeling of personal worth. In other words, self-esteem is the sum of confidence and self-respect. Empathy is the ability to understand the needs, feelings, and situations of others, putting oneself in their shoes and thus being able to respond correctly to their reactions and understand their emotions (Balart, 2013). Autonomy refers to the ability to set limits and rules for oneself without the influence of external or internal pressures (Moderna: Modelo de Desarrollo Económico de Navarra, n.d.). Finally, creativity is the capacity of the brain to reach new conclusions and solve problems in an original way (Huerta, Rodríguez, In Castro, & In Escobar, 2014).

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The study of resilience in Venezuelan refugees and immigrants would contribute to a better understanding of the situation they live in after their mobilization. Mental health is an important part of the development of people, especially those who have come to live a traumatic experience, as is the case of the crisis in Venezuela. The new information gathered in this study will contribute to improving the services currently available to refugees in Ecuador by non-governmental organizations, international and national agencies, and specialists in mental health and shelter.

This study will involve the use of a psychological tool developed in Peru by the psychology PHD professor Ana Cecilia Salgado. She has a background in research and is a professor at Santiago de Loyola University and at Marcelino Champagnat University, in Lima (ORCID, n.d.). The psychometric tool called "Inventory of Personal Factors of resilience" and Salgado created this inventory in 2005, to create a contemporary way to measure Resilience stating that this is one of the most researched variables nowadays, due to the implications it has in the prevention and promotion of the human development (Salgado, 2005). This tool was specifically developed to evaluate personal factors of resilience in children aged 7 to 12 in Peru.

This Psychometric tool was featured in a study carried out in Arequipa Peru, "Differences in Resilience, based on Sociodemographic factors in students age 8 to 12 from marginal zones" by Virgilia Quishpe and Luz Vera, where they tested high school students to determine if the Socio-economic factors had an influence in the level of resilience the children would develop (Quispe & Vera, 2017).

**General objective:** To identify the levels of resilience of Venezuelan migrants and refugees who travel and settle in Ecuador, due to abandonment by the government and the economic, social and political crisis that the Bolivarian country is experiencing.

**Specific Objectives:** To analyze the levels of resilience presented, taking into account the variable of schooling present in each individual. Compare the results obtained with relevant data and studies carried out in the country. Investigate possible variables that influence and give a deeper perspective of the factors that comprise the development of resilience.

### Literature Review Refugees

Refugees are people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find security in another country. Moreover, they are protected under international law, in the 1951 Convention on Refugees (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, n.d.). This defines them as: "Someone who is unable to return to their country of origin because of a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 1951, p. 6). According to official figures of the UNHCR, by the end of 2017, there will be 25,4 million refugees among men, women, and children registered around the world.

According to UNHCR (2017), there are three types of migrants: refugees, displaced persons and asylum seekers. Refugees are those who, because of life-threatening persecution, such as war, have been forced to cross borders to take refuge in a host country. Displaced persons are those who have had to flee their homes for causes similar to those of refugees, but seek refuge in the same country, in more secure areas; and asylum seekers are those who have applied for refugee status to a country other than their own, but who have not yet received a definitive response (United Nations Agency for Refugees, 2017). In most cases these groups are a product of forced migration: the movement of people in which the pressure that it causes is observed, and the threat to life and their survival is due to natural causes or at the hands of people (International Organization for Migration, 2018). This definition fits the situation that Venezuelan refugees are facing today.

According to the study conducted by the Dutch intercultural psychiatrists, Ortal Slobodin and Joop TVM de Jong (2014), it is clear that psychological problems among refugees and asylum seekers are not rare, especially since the prevalence of trauma-related issues is very high within the crisis boundaries and the adversity of experiences associated with forced migration. What this study concluded is that there is a shortage on guiding frameworks that are available to researchers and clinicians, interested in the intervention and work with these vulnerable individuals. The idea of looking into refugees' mental health was also proposed by Lindert, Carta, Schafer and Mollica (2016) in their study. This study looked at the experiences and traumatic events they may have been subjected to, such as war trauma, persecution, humiliation or torture among other human rights violations. Usually, before they are being forced to flee, individuals may experience physical assault, extreme fear, loss of livelihood; the destruction of their communities, separation of families, friends and cultural systems. According to this research, the impact and effect of these stressors on the mental health of the individuals has a relation with the violence and traumatic events they had been exposed to. Considering this, females and unaccompanied minors are even more likely to develop a wide variety of issues due to their large exposure to different events and feelings (Lindert, J., Carta, M. G., Schäfer, I., & Mollica, R. F, 2016).

On the other hand, there is the situation with migrants. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines migrants as: any individual who moves or has moved across an international border or within the same country, outside his or her usual place of residence independent of: (1) his or her legal status; (2) the voluntary or involuntary nature of the displacement; (3) the causes of the displacement; or (4) the duration of his or her stay" (2018).

### Resilience

When it comes to the concept of resilience, some authors state that it has many aspects and definitions depending on its core use. For example, Fletcher & Sarkar (2013) consider resilience under the two core concepts of adversity and positive adaptation. Their study reveals that resilience is required as a response to different adversities, from ongoing daily hassles to major life situations, and also that positive adaptation must be appropriate to the adversity examined. On the other hand, there is the other conceptualization of resilience, leaning towards it being the interactive influence of psychological characteristics within stress and stress processes (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013).

Resilience is exposed as an adaptive capacity of any system. These can usually be assessed by observing its response when encountered with disruptions or challenges. As expressed by Woods (2017) in his book on resilience, as an adaptive capacity, resilience has limits or boundary conditions that are tested by disruption, since these are the ones that would tell, where the limit of the resilience lies. therefore, how the individual will adapt.

When it comes to resilience, studies associated to refugees and immigrants, research to date has predominantly focused on factors that make individuals more vulnerable for developing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and /or psychological distress, as exposed in the study titled "Resilience as a Protective Factor against the Development of Psychopathology among Refugees" where the authors indicate that very few papers have studied potential protective factors such as resilience (Arnetz, Rofa, Arnetz, Ventimiglia, & Jamil, 2013). By "protective factor" it refers to a quality that is developed or possessed before the time of the situation, enabling the individual to have a resource to rely on and that would protect their psyche by the time, and after, the situation happens. What was found was that a resilience-oriented approach, putting more focus on studying the protective and recovery-fostering individual assets is what is needed with the large numbers of re-settlers arriving from conflict and unstable zones, rather than utilizing a symptom-oriented approach (Arnetz et al., 2013). Leaving to the understand the great importance of the resilience factor in the adaptation skills that individuals in this vulnerable circumstances need.

In terms of resilience in the context of an armed conflict or a humanitarian crisis, as it was exposed in the study by Siriwardhana, Ali, Roberts, & Stewart (2014) the global burden of forced migration due to armed conflict, and in this case, to economic and political instability, is increasingly recognized as an important issue in global health. Involuntary migration or forced migration is a factor that generates a higher risk in the development of mental disorders in the individuals that attempt them. However, since resilience is defined as the ability of a person to successfully adapt to or recover from stressful and traumatic experiences, it has been stressed as a key potential protective factor for those migrating as a consequence of the countries situation as is the case of the Venezuelans in Ecuador.

For Clinical Psychologist Jenyfer Aguilar (personal communication, March 19, 2019), resilience is the capacity of an individual to take psychic tools to enable them to accommodate and adapt to their location and situation. As an expert in Human rights, Jenyfer has been working for the Jewish service as their Social Psychologist since October 2018, she is the one in charge of reviewing the status of each immigrant that stays in "Techo para el Camino". She believes that there is a correlation in the level of schooling a person has and their level of resilience, which will be revised further on this study.

### Venezuelan situation

For almost a decade, the world had been the witness of the Venezuelan crisis that erupted from an economic downturn and led to its ramification into an, overall, humanitarian crisis. This ramification has created a direct correlation with the changes in the migration patterns in Latin America and the Caribbean, both voluntary and forced. John (2018), in her economical study of the Venezuelan crisis, stated that due to the growing political upheaval Venezuelan migrants are looking for better and safer opportunities and living spaces. Poverty and crime have escalated to levels never imagined in the country. There is a real fear of becoming victims of human trafficking in the region and its borders, with cases of sex tourism, and smuggling having been conformed. As such, individuals see fleeing as their only solution. As John states, Venezuela was once a thriving economy where people had a good life; they are now struggling to survive. This is a great example as to why it is relevant to talk about mental health in Venezuelan immigrants. Their background and their history has not prepared them for a crisis.

When it comes to culture shock or stress caused by the differences in culture of the immigrant and the host country, it is said that if they are from similar cultural backgrounds, the shock is lessened as are the possibilities of developing any mental disorder (Schwartz et al., 2018). Cultural stress theory states that immigrant groups in host environment contexts that are more culturally similar to them would report a less negative context of reception, compared to immigrant groups settling in countries that are more culturally dissimilar. However, it was found that immigrants from Venezuela, settling in Colombia would face more discrimination and negative connotations than those who decided to settle up north in the United States, leading to questioning their levels of resilience and adaptation capacity.

### Venezuelan situation in Ecuador

Ecuador has never been a significant destination for immigrants, but as of the last decade, it has become an attraction for migrants because its economy is dollarized. The current situation is represented in the evolution of the non-Ecuadorian population, as it was shown by the last two censuses; this population grew from 104.130 in 2000 to 194.398 in 2012 (90% increase). Most immigrants come from Colombia and Peru. Colombian citizens represent 49% of the total foreign population in Ecuador, and 98% of the refugees are recognized by the Ecuadorian State (Cerrutti & Parrado, 2015).

As for Venezuelans, the currency is one of the main incentives they have for coming to Ecuador, but not as a final destination. The Venezuelan born coordinator of "Techo para el camino" (A roof for the road), part of the Organization Hogar de Cristo, Ronald Borges, described the place as a refuge for the immigrants and refugees, where they can have a

meal, a bed, water, showers, migration advice and internet access for a limited time before they prepare to continue on their journey (R. Borges, personal communication, March 13, 2019). This organization has been working in Guayaquil for about a year and a half, when the migration situation was at its peak. Borges comments that a common characteristic that the Venezuelan immigrants have when they reach Guayaquil city is that they come running away from a crisis, with no access to human rights; they come from long and exhausting journeys on foot or hitchhiking, looking to get to Peru and Chile. Ecuador is not their destination anymore. According to Borges, who is also a specialist in coaching and an immigrant himself, resilience plays an important part on the determination of whether or not the individual will prosper in their journey. It is their capacity to make a possibility of a better outcome, from an adversity (R. Borges, personal communication, March 13, 2019).

### Methodology

The design of this study presents a non-experimental, transactional structure of a descriptive nature. The study was carried out with the beneficiaries of the Hogar de Cristo Organization, where migrants from Venezuela come to Ecuador in search of support and temporary shelter assistance. Hogar de Cristo Organization in Guayaquil was selected for convenience since this is a non-governmental organization that works together with other organizations in search of a better quality of life for the neediest in Ecuador and in recent years has been inserted in providing and supporting assistance to refugees and asylum seekers worldwide, including those of Venezuelan origin with their action Techo para el Camino. This location is located in La Atarazana area, behind the Bolivarian Technical Institute ITB.

The study consisted of the evaluation of a focus group of migrants who entered Ecuador from January 2019 to March 2019. During this period the migratory waves have intensified, more citizens have mobilized. In the same way, several countries, where migrants go, have changed their migration policies. Countries such as Panama, Nicaragua, and Colombia are now applying for sealed visas for Venezuelans to enter (Noticiero Digital, 2018). This means an increase in the number of citizens entering Ecuador.

For the most accurate assessment of resilience levels, a questionnaire was administered to 50 people with migrant status, ranging in age from 18-60 years of age. The tool used was the Personal Factors Scale (Salgado, 2005) made up of 48 items that evaluate the dimensions of Self-esteem, Empathy, Autonomy, Humor, and Creativity; using a two-choice response method, YES or NO. For this study, the tool was modified by reducing the factors evaluated to Self-esteem, Autonomy and Creativity due to the high relevance these three factors have in the development of resilience when migrating to a different country as a result of a humanitarian and political crisis.

The evaluation and rating of this instrument are given by the following method: in each of the factors mentioned there are three categories of the score, being high, medium and low; the range of direct score on each scale is 1-10. In addition, a joint total resilience score is given through the five normative scores establishing the following categories: very low, low, average, high, and very high.

Among the variables implemented in the study are sex, age, and level of schooling. The latter provides a view of the economic and social status of those evaluated, giving us a perspective on another important factor in the study of resilience.

A study conducted by students at National University of San Marcos in Lima, Peru, "Personal factors of resilience and self-concept in primary school students of Metropolitan Lima" had the objective to establish the existence, or lack thereof, between the resilience factors and self-concept in students from primary schools in Lima using the inventory of personal factors of resilience (Matalinares et al., 2011).

### Supportive Methodology

As part of the methodology in this study and in order to provide a qualita-

tive analysis and more in depth information on the situation of the Venezuelan immigrants in Ecuador, two interviews were performed to a mental health and human rights specialist working directly with the migrants in Guayaquil, and to a Coach and Venezuelan activist who coordinates a temporary house in Guayaquil for immigrants.

Jenyfer Aguilar is a Clinical Psychologist with a Master degree in Human Rights. She currently works as a Social Psychologist for the Jewish Service in Ecuador, focusing on the Area of Guayaquil. Her job has been focused on providing assessment in terms of migration and analysis of profiles that are considered vulnerable, to provide them with help in terms of housing, job opportunities and other necessities.

Ronald Borger, a certified coaching expert, is the current coordinator of “Un techo para el camino” since the beginning of the project a year and a half ago. He was born in Venezuela and arrived in Ecuador when he was assured his position to work with the organization “Hogar de Cristo”, having experienced the crisis from beginning to his arrival to this country.

The main limitation found is the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian standardization of the psychological tool since it was developed for a Peruvian population. The second limitation was the age range for what this tool was originally destined towards.

Another limitation in the study was the compilation of individuals for the sample, since there are many places and NGOs that deal with the flow of Venezuelan immigrants with assistance and asylum, most of these were hard to contact and get permissions to get interviews and participants for the test. The sample size is average compared to the population. This sample represents a good view of the general trend and it gives leverage to future studies to consider. Further studies would require more qualitative analysis and more in depth interviews in order to consider all the factors that affect mental health, specifically, resilience. The results present a high percentage of reliability due to the qualities of the group that was analyzed, that are qualities shared among most of the migrant population.

Lastly, there was scarce information on the specific issue. There are very few to none prior studies around the current problem and analysis of resilience in this kind of population in the country, making it difficult to find referential studies.

Tabla 1. Sample population

Gender		Schooling		
Female	Male	Secondary education (6-12 years of education)	Technical (2 years of higher education)	University (4+ years of higher education)
42% (21)	58% (29)	72% (36)	6% (3)	22% (11)

Source: Own elaboration based on surveys and interviews. Note: This table represents the percentages of representation within the external variables.

The external variables were categorized and 42% of the sample is female and the remaining 58% is male. With regard to the level of schooling, 72% of those surveyed only got at least 12 years of education, either graduated with a baccalaureate from high school or dropped out before finishing and don't have a technical or university degree. On the other end, only 22% are pursuing or have completed the university education corresponding to 4 or more years of higher education; leaving 6% having completed a technical education, corresponding to 2 years of superior education.

## Results

In response to the general research objective of revealing the levels of resilience of Venezuelan immigrants who have arrived in Ecuador, it was found that the sample has a combined resilience score of 21,56. This result indicates that this sample falls into the category of "Average" according to the scale of interpretation on the understanding that they have an AVERAGE capacity to succeed, grow, be strong and prevail under difficult circumstances (Salgado, 2004).

Tabla 2. Average values by factors and their corresponding category

Personal Resilience factors	Score	Category
Self Esteem	7,95	Medium
Autonomy	8,64	High
Creativity	4,98	Medium

Source: Own elaboration based on surveys and interviews. Note: This table presents the scores obtained for individual factors and the category to which they belong according to the rating scale.

The results obtained from the individuals evaluated are shown in Table 2. This table indicates that for the different factors that comprise Resilience, the sample reached scores that locate the factors as shown, MEDIUM on Self-esteem; HIGH on Autonomy; and MEDIUM on Creativity as indicated in the scale.

## Analysis and Discussion of Results

In the resilience assessment of this work, an overall result of resilience was obtained that corresponds to an AVERAGE level. It is worth mentioning that in this study three external variables were proposed and evaluated: age, sex, and level of schooling. With respect to sex, it was identified that the majority (58%) of those evaluated were men, which does not allow for a concrete evaluation due to the inequality in the number of men and women evaluated; therefore, it is recommended that future studies on this topic present a sample where the amounts are equal between men and women. According to Prado & Del Águila (2003) and its study on resilience in Peru, there are no significant differences in the quantitative part, but they did find differences in the interaction part, indicating a positive result in the female sex.

Age is usually a determining factor when evaluating psychological aspects, due to rational and cognitive maturation. It is for this reason that the age ranges evaluated can determine the levels or capacity of resilience in people after a difficult situation that is faced. According to the results obtained, a majority of individuals within an age range of 19-50 years are identified. According to Tuttillo's research (2014), there is an important relationship between resilience factors present during the school stage and their influence on adequate personal development. This indicates that if the person had training in resilient factors, whether this was obtained in school or university, they are much more likely to develop a resilient personality.

The next part of the interpretation of the personal resilience factor test is the interpretation by individual factors. According to the theory, an individual is considered resilient when he is able to face difficulties or traumatic situations and get on with their life (APA, n.d). According to the results obtained, it can be inferred that the Venezuelan immigrant population has a medium level of global resilience and an average level of factor resilience, which can be correlated with the external variables that were evaluated. These results are good because they signify a better outcome than expected, indicating that there is, at least, an average resilience level complementing the individuals in their adaptation and survival through their journeys.

The first factor evaluated is that of self-esteem which, according to the sample results, this factor obtained an average score of 7,94 fitting in the category of MEDIUM. An important factor in the acceptance of the situation they live and having the necessary confidence makes the process of resilience and move forward more fluid. It was clear during the administration of the test, that the individuals felt out of place in

their spatial context and some of them even expressed feelings of there being no other choice, expressing a sense of defeat but at the same time, determination to reach a safer place. These results represent the population's resistance to adapt to the new environments in a short time, which should be interpreted taking in consideration the context they leave behind in their country, developing a feeling of insecurity and inability to trust easier.

In terms of autonomy, with a score of 8,64, it is placed in the HIGH category in the evaluation scale. Autonomous people are able to do things on their own without the need to wait for someone else to give instructions, or do it for them. It can be said that most of the people that leave Venezuela, do it in small groups of 4 or in pairs, when it comes to family migration. Some of them choose to leave on their own, going solo and maybe tagging along another person or group that they find on the way. Other cases include the chain migration, where one member of the family immigrated and after some time would encourage another member of the family to do so once they have found some stability in the foreign country. This backs up the reason for the autonomy factor being higher than the others. There should be more research into individuals that flee Venezuela in order to understand the reason for their choice of migration and how this migration might influence their mental health adaptation.

The last factor is creativity that according to Huerta and Com. (2014), is the capacity of the brain to draw new conclusions and solve problems in different ways. This factor obtained a score of 4,98, which, according to the scale provided, is placed in the category of MEDIUM.

The education factor should be further evaluated, as literature indicates a possible influence on resilience. However, it was not tested in this study, and does not have a large role in the paper. Having university education is said to influence the way in which people face these types of situations, as indicated by Rodríguez & Velásquez (2017).

As for socioeconomic levels, it is a variable that should be further studied because of its apparent influence on the perception of the quality of life of each person. It is likely to have a possible influence on the way people react to changes in their socioeconomic situation after migration. In a study conducted in the city of Quito, García & Soria (2011), it was found that a lower socioeconomic level is associated with lower levels of resilience. As for this study, the variable could not be tested properly, nevertheless, it is recommended that in future studies, this variable be taken into account to obtain a much clearer view of the previous circumstances that may affect the development of high or low resilience.

Overall, these results show a part of the general perception of the situation Venezuelans are facing in Ecuador and how their level of resilience helps in their adaptation process. The results serve as a base for further studies to be done on the mental health obstacles such immigrants face. Research that focuses on the psychological factors of migration can help formulate policies to improve conditions for migrants such as those in Ecuador, or simply give a perspective on the situation in order to provide better assistance.

## Conclusions

The objective of this research was to analyze the levels of resilience of Venezuelan migrants in Ecuador, resulting from the ongoing crisis in the Bolivarian country. This was done by applying the personal factor scale, in the three categories of self-esteem, autonomy and creativity.

After conducting the resilience evaluations, it is clear that of the sample evaluated, the majority turned out to have a medium level of global resilience and an average level of factor resilience, indicating that faced with the adversity experienced in their native country they were nevertheless able to strive for a way to better quality of life. With regards to self-esteem, Venezuelans were found to have a medium level. For autonomy they scored a high level. And, for creativity they had a medium level. Overall, there is, at the least, an average resilience level comple-

menting these individuals as they adapt to the environment during their migration process.

The results of the psychometric tests show that Venezuelan immigrants and refugees are resilient at different levels and that there are other variables that affect their resilience levels. However, the correlations of these factors were not determined in this study. Mental health is influenced by individuals' surroundings and upbringing environment. Hence, it is pertinent to acknowledge that there are defining socioeconomic factors that need further investigation in order to obtain more holistic results.

This study did not look at the extent of added obstacles Venezuelan migrants may be facing in Ecuador, such as unemployment, discrimination, mistreatment, and unfair payment. These factors are likely to also affect resilience levels of migrants. As such, these factors deserve greater attention in order to better understand the situation of Venezuelans in Ecuador. Nevertheless, the results in this study advanced the understanding, from a mental health perspective, of these migrants, contributing to the field of cultural psychology with reference to migrants.

In future investigations, it would be recommended to create focus groups of Venezuelan immigrants to further investigate the different aspects mentioned with the results from this study. Also, more in-depth and individual interviews with the migrants would provide qualitative information helping better understand their situations and their perception on resilience. Furthermore, reaching out to more professionals specialized in this area of research would provide greater insight in order and further cover other psychological aspects of migration such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression, that unfold from studying resilience.

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